

# ***Making It Happen In Montana***

## **School Wellness in Action**



## ***Making It Happen In Montana School Wellness in Action***

**The Montana Team Nutrition Program  
Office of Public Instruction School Nutrition Programs  
September 2006**



This document provides examples of model school practices regarding nutrition and physical activity from schools throughout Montana. It is also available electronically on the *Montana Office of Public Instruction School Wellness Policy: Guidance for Montana Schools* website, <http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/wellness.html>.

Please contact either of the following offices for assistance:

**Montana Team Nutrition Program**

Montana State University  
202 Romney Gym, PO Box 173360  
Bozeman, MT 59717-3360  
Telephone: (406) 994-5641  
Fax: (406) 994-7300  
Katie Bark, RD  
E-mail: [kbark@mt.gov](mailto:kbark@mt.gov)

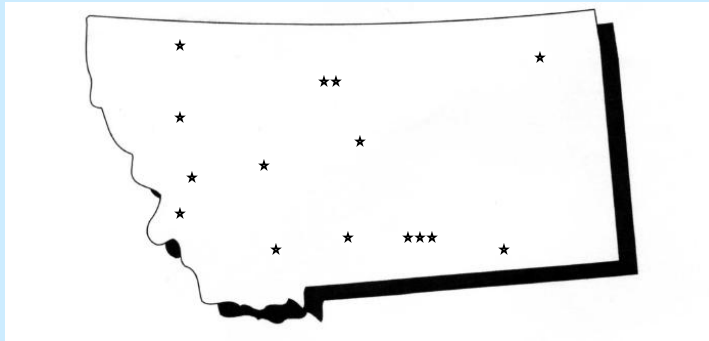
**Montana Office of Public Instruction**

School Nutrition Programs  
PO Box 202501  
Helena, MT 59620-2501  
Telephone: (406) 444-2501  
Fax: (406) 444-2955  
Chris Emerson, MS, RD  
E-mail: [cemerson@mt.gov](mailto:cemerson@mt.gov)

**Acknowledgments:** Thank you to these Montana schools that were willing to share their practices and procedures in creating a healthier school environment. We appreciate their cooperation and willingness to share their experiences, information, lessons learned and advice.

***Box Elder Elementary School, Bozeman School District, Central Middle School – Whitefish, Ennis School District, Hellgate Elementary School, Helena Public Schools, Laurel Public Schools, Lewistown Public Schools, Lolo Elementary School, Lockwood Elementary School, Ronan School District, Rocky Boy Public School, Saco Public Schools, St. Labre Indian School, Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch.***

## **Champions of School Wellness Throughout Montana**



*This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsements by the U.S. Government.*

### **Document Developed By**

Mary Stein, MS      Katie Bark, RD      Anne Schumacher

Montana Team Nutrition Program  
September 2006

***School Wellness supports kids' health  
and ability to learn!***

# Table of Contents

Recess Before Lunch = Success Central Middle School, Whitefish.....	6
Healthy Eating, Active Living Ronan School District.....	8
School Improvement Team Scores! Hellgate Elementary School, Missoula.....	10
Winner of the Gold! Lolo Elementary School.....	12
Healthy School Climate Helena Public Schools.....	14
Variety is the Spice of Life Ennis School District.....	16
Healthy Vending Resolution Bozeman Public Schools.....	18
Delicious and Nutritious at School Lewistown Public Schools.....	20
HealthierUS Silver Award! Box Elder Elementary School.....	22
Healthy Eating, Disease Prevention Rocky Boy Public Schools.....	24



Staff Wellness Leads the Way Laurel Public Schools.....	26
Commitment to Wellness Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch.....	28
Coordinated and Comprehensive Lockwood Elementary .....	30
Meals that Look and Taste Great St. Labre Indian School.....	32
Customer Satisfaction in Saco Saco Public Schools.....	34

## **School Wellness in Action**



## **Recess Before Lunch = Success Central Middle School, Whitefish**

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in School:** 25%

**Region:** Northwest Montana

### **Healthy School Environment Emphasis**

Changes in lunch/recess schedule and changes in vending and a la carte offerings have resulted in success for the students of Central Middle School.



### **What's Going On?**

Principal Kim Anderson observed a trend and it was not a positive one. The litter on the playground from students' lunches and snacks indicated that the children were mainly consuming foods of poor nutritional value. He also noted an increase in discipline referrals to

the office in the afternoon hours. Added to all of this, he observed that children were rushing through their lunches and the amount of food waste was substantial. Mr. Anderson knew a change needed to happen and had heard about *Recess Before Lunch* as a means of allowing children to expend their energy first and then settle down for a more relaxed meal. He also saw that change needed to occur in the food that was being offered to his students.

### **Features of this Model Program**

- Beginning in the 2002-03 school year, the lunchtime recess schedule was changed to *Recess Before Lunch*.
- All soft drinks were removed from the school. Water and 100% fruit juice replaced these non-nutritious offerings.
- Thanks to a refrigerated vending machine purchased by the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), students were given the option to purchase items such as milk, yogurt, pudding, string cheese and fruit from the vending machine.
- The a la carte offerings were altered. All candy was removed from a la carte sales and items such as bagels, salads, sandwiches, fresh fruit and baked chips were made available.

***School Wellness Champion!***

### Words of Wisdom

*"Recess Before Lunch has been one of the most important changes we have made at Whitefish Middle School in some time. This change, along with nutritious offerings throughout the day, has given our students an additional edge in being more academically successful. It has assisted in changing the entire environment of our school."*

- Mr. Kim Anderson, Principal

### Outcomes

- Revenue from a la carte and vending machine sales did not suffer due to the healthy changes implemented in Central Middle School. The net proceeds remain as they were before the changes.
- Disciplinary incidents in the lunchroom have decreased. Children now have the opportunity to be physically active prior to eating and the result is a more relaxed eating environment.
- Teachers report that they now have up to 10 more minutes of instructional time with students due to the schedule change and the ability of the students to settle down faster following lunch. Afternoon discipline referrals to the Principal's office declined significantly following *Recess Before Lunch*.
- Teachers have reported improved attentiveness and student behavior in the afternoon following the *Recess Before Lunch* and school nutrition program changes.



### Future Plans

- Increase students' opportunity for physical activity throughout the day; and
- Add an additional Health Enhancement instructor to the staff so that all students have the opportunity for physical activity each day.

### For more information, contact:

Kim Anderson, Principal  
andersonk@wfps.k12.mt.us  
(406) 862-8650

***School Wellness Champion!***

## Healthy Eating, Active Living Ronan School District

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in District:** 61%

**Region:** Western Montana

### Healthy School Environment Emphasis

Children and teens within the Ronan School District are eating more fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains and are finding many more opportunities to be physically active during and after school thanks to the combined effort of a nutrition-focused school foodservice program and district and community support for active living.



### What's Going On?

Changes made to both the breakfast and lunch programs have increased the amount of fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains available to students in Ronan. A fresh fruit bar at breakfast and a salad bar at lunch, along with easy grab-and-go style serving, has resulted in positive nutrition changes for these students. In addition, the school district and community have banded together to construct an event center with a walking track, weight room and more. The opportunity for active living for Ronan students just keeps getting better!

### Features of this Model Program

- New fruit bar at breakfast and salad bars at lunch.
- *Grab-and-Go* style serving of fruits and vegetables.
- Web site developed by the school foodservice program – web site includes pictures of healthy food offerings, menu ideas and healthy living tips.
- Event center added to the school/community. Center includes a walking track and weight room and was largely funded through grant money.
- Active living events offered to students:
  - \*Earth Day Run
  - \*Mileage Club (a walking club)
  - \*Governor's Cup Fun Run

***School Wellness Champion!***



- The school foodservice program provides healthy snacks for special activity events and after-school programs.
- Parents involved in positive healthy school environment change through a regular parent newsletter.
- Physical activity opportunity for whole community through a walking program in the school gym.

#### **Words of Wisdom**

*"If you offer it, they will take it! One of the biggest changes I have noticed is that, since we have begun offering fresh fruit, 90-95% of our students take fruit in the mornings. If nothing else, this has been a great change in helping them make healthy choices."*

-Marsha Wartick, School Foodservice Director

#### **Outcomes**

- *Recess Before Lunch* schedule has resulted in students eating more of their meals and returning to class ready to learn.
- More high school students remain on campus for lunch. A second salad bar was installed due to increased demand. Teachers have noticed improvement in afternoon behavior.
- Parental support for change is high.
- Staff interest in healthy lifestyle issues has increased.



#### **Future Plans**

- Continue to make progress in supporting healthy lifestyles;
- Involve parents more in the change process;
- Link curriculum to healthy lifestyle issues; and
- Enhance media literacy component of curriculum to help students understand the influence of media ads on issues affecting nutrition, activity and health.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Ronan School District  
 Janet Sucha, Intervention Specialist  
[janet.sucha@ronank12.edu](mailto:janet.sucha@ronank12.edu)  
 Marsha Wartick, Foodservice Director  
[marsha.wartick@ronank12.edu](mailto:marsha.wartick@ronank12.edu)

***School Wellness Champion!***

## **School Improvement Team Scores! Hellgate Elementary School**

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in School:** 36.4%

**Region:** Western Montana



### **Healthy School Environment Emphasis**

A district-wide commitment to promote healthy lifestyle changes has added life, interest and improved nutrition to the K-8 school food service program at Hellgate Elementary School, as well as increased involvement in a multitude of active living clubs and opportunities.

### **What's Going On?**

A School Improvement Team was formed to address strategies for promoting healthy lifestyle choices in this school district. The food service program immediately began addressing the food selection process, food preparation procedures and variety in the menu for both its breakfast and lunch programs. Through the leadership of a school food service director with vast marketing expertise and a desire to make school meals both healthy and fun, Hellgate Elementary School has made positive change. They now offer a variety of menu choices at both breakfast and lunch. The eating area has been transformed into a welcoming cafeteria environment, with nutrition education messages incorporated throughout. The School Improvement Team then turned its focus to aligning physical education activities with the goals of promoting active lifestyle choices for students, both in school and out of school. Through the combined efforts of a supportive school board and the work of the School Improvement Team, changes to curriculum were adopted and opportunities for physical activity throughout the school day and after school were increased.

### **Features of this Model Program**

- School Improvement Team formed. Members include: a licensed nutritionist, parents, teachers, administrators, school food service director, school board members.

***School Wellness Champion!***

- Food service program changes were made, such as expanded food choices for students, creation of a welcoming atmosphere within eating areas and the addition of nutrition education décor.
- *Recess Before Lunch* incorporated into daily schedule.
- Physical activity opportunities expanded (Governor's Cup run/walk program, orienteering club, digital dance, environmental club, fly-fishing field trips).

### Words of Wisdom

*"To me, making healthy changes is all about presentation and respect. If you present yourself in a positive way, if you present the changes in a positive way and if you present your product in a positive way AND if you respect your students/customers, your attempts to be healthy will be successful and so will the students' desire to learn!"*

-Katie Appel-Goble, Foodservice Director, Hellgate Elementary

### Outcomes

- Staff are expressing improved connections to students
- More students are feeling comfortable with district employees as a result of district efforts to promote healthy lifestyle choices.

### Future Plans

- Continue moving forward with healthy changes to their school environment;
- Further address their goals for healthy eating and active living, by planning the construction of a second dining area with a "food court" atmosphere that will increase the opportunity for more healthy food choices; and
- Continued promotion of a physically active and productive life style are also among their goals for the school.



### For more information, contact:

Katie Appel-Goble  
(406) 541-7782  
[Kgoble@hellgate.k12.mt.us](mailto:Kgoble@hellgate.k12.mt.us)

***School Wellness Champion!***

## **Winner of the Gold!** **Lolo Elementary School**

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in School:** 42.35%

**Region:** Located in the Bitterroot Valley in Western Montana

### **Healthy School Environment Emphasis**

Lolo Elementary School is a pioneering leader in making changes to support a healthy school environment.

FIRST Team Nutrition school in the state of Montana

FIRST school in Montana to receive the HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award.

### **What's Going On?**

Due to great personal and professional interest on the part of the school foodservice manager and school administration and staff, Lolo Elementary made healthy changes in the food offered at school, increased student opportunity for physical activity and eventually applied for and received the first HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award in the state of Montana.

### **Features of this Model Program**

- Taste-testing days put in place to encourage children to try new fruits and vegetables.
- Foodservice staff altered all of their recipes so that all grain options were whole grain.
- Cafeteria environment updated to create a pleasant eating environment and to support messages of healthy eating and active living.
- Back to School Celebration centered on healthy food choices.
- Kitchen tours are provided to students to enhance their connection with the school meals program and healthy choices.
- Nutrition articles are included in the school newsletter.
- Nutrition education is included throughout the grade levels.
- Physical education classes are offered at all grade levels and include fun school-wide campaigns such as "The Feelin' Good Mileage Club."

***School Wellness Champion!***

### Words of Wisdom

*"I think that this has been one of the most gratifying things that I have ever done in the work place. Any time you have a little second grader...come into your office and tell you what is healthy in their lunch, you know you have done something."*

- Linda Free, School Foodservice Manager  
Lolo Elementary School

### Outcomes

- Increased visibility and participation in school meals program.
- Positive feedback from parents, teachers and community members about changes made that support a healthy school environment.
- Mentoring other schools/districts in the state based upon their experience with healthy school environment change and the HealthierUS School Challenge application process.



### Future Plans

- Demonstrating the staff's continued dedication to supporting healthy eating and active living by sharing their expertise and experience of becoming a HealthierUS School Challenge Gold school with schools and districts around the state.
- Sharing menus, recipes, as well as tips and strategies for incorporating more nutrition education within the school.
- Ongoing updating and adaptation of the curriculum to continue supporting student wellness.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Linda Free, School Foodservice Manager, or  
Alice Kupilik, Principal  
Lolo Elementary School  
(406) 273-0451

Visit the HealthierUS School Challenge Web site at:  
<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html>

***School Wellness Champion!***

# Healthy School Climate

## Helena Public Schools

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in District:** 24%

**Region:** Central Montana

### Healthy School Environment Emphasis

Improving school climate through affiliation with the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI) and a dedication to helping students and staff adopt and practice healthful lifestyle behaviors.

### What's Going On?

For over 10 years the school district has enhanced the school climate by building environments that support all children in achieving success and making healthful choices concerning academics and behavior. To provide their staff professional development opportunities in this area, the school district has been a part of the MBI through the Office of Public Instruction. Professional development exploring the link between nutrition and both behavior and academic performance has been an emphasis within the district. Education on healthful lifestyle behaviors has been incorporated into the curriculum for all students.

In 2005, in response to the school wellness policy mandate, the district developed a School Health Advisory Council. The council began by utilizing the CDC's School Health Index (SHI) to assess all aspects of the district's health and wellness programs and practices. The council then drafted a plan which is now the basis for the implementation of the district's school wellness policy.



### Features of this Model Program

- Nutrition subcommittees on many of the MBI school teams.
- School nurses (5.0 FTE) provide care and education.
- All health enhancement teachers discipline certified.
- Staff wellness program - coordinators in each building.

***School Wellness Champion!***

- Lunch and breakfast are served at 100% of the schools.
- High school schedules include morning nutrition break.
- *Recess Before Lunch* in place at 73% of K-5 schools.
- Enhanced cafeteria décor promotes wellness.
- School Health Advisory Council guides wellness policy.
- Improved nutrition offered throughout the school environment —school meals, student stores, vending, student rewards, fundraisers.

#### **Words of Wisdom**

*"One of the strengths of our plan lies in the direct involvement of community members on the Council. It has also helped that we have listened to staff and administrators and moved slowly on implementation."*

- Joe Furshong, Director of Student Services

#### **Outcomes**

- Affiliation with MBI leads to improved learning environment for students and teaching environment for staff.
- Strong administrative support (school board, superintendent, principals) for enhancing the school environment.
- Active and effective School Health Advisory Council made up of key stakeholders from the District and community.

#### **Future Plans**

- Maintain an active council to direct the district's school wellness implementation plan;
- Complete a comprehensive school wellness plan to implement the school wellness policy;
- Pilot more Recess Before Lunch programs at K-5 level; and
- Improve the atmosphere of the school cafeterias to enhance student participation and promote healthy behaviors.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Mr. Joe Furshong  
Director of Student Services  
Helena Public Schools  
(406) 324-2005  
[jfurshong@helena.k12.mt.us](mailto:jfurshong@helena.k12.mt.us)

***School Wellness Champion!***

# Variety is the Spice of Life

## Ennis School District

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in District:** 23%

**Region:** South Central Montana

### Healthy School Environment Emphasis

High quality school nutrition program with an emphasis on serving students a wide variety of food choices.

### What's Going On?

Since 2003, the school district has been committed to enhancing their school foodservice program and making the changes necessary to serve high quality and varied meals to students. Despite the challenge of an open campus, the administration has been able to keep more students close to school at lunchtime and increase participation in the school meals program. The administration, teachers and school foodservice professionals also have improved the nutritional integrity of the meals by providing more homemade meals and a greater variety of fresh fruits and vegetables. Each day the students are offered one of six different theme bars in addition to the regular lunch meal. A salad bar, with a wide variety of fruits and vegetables, is also offered daily to all students. Teamwork, including gathering input from the student customers, has been a key factor in the healthful changes in Ennis.



### Features of this Model Program

- Breakfast, lunch and after-school snacks served.
- One cafeteria for K-12 students.
- Recess before Lunch for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders.
- Homemade items are served as often as possible.
- Fruits and vegetables are served daily.
- A salad bar offered to all students each day.

***School Wellness Champion!***



- “Theme bars” offered to 6-12<sup>th</sup> grade students- Deli Sandwich Bar, Soup Bar, Chinese Bar, Taco Bar, Baked Potato Bar or Pasta Bar.
- Cold water dispensers in the cafeteria.
- Colorful nutrition posters on walls.
- Music is played for high school lunch period.
- Vending choices –water, juice and sports drinks.
- Protein included in each breakfast menu.



### Words of Wisdom

*“We work hard to give our kids a variety of choices each day. It is all worth it though, especially if the kids learn to eat healthier.”*

-Tammy Wham, Foodservice Director

### Outcomes

- Since 2003, increased participation in lunch program, especially by high school students.
- Students are enjoying mealtime more, while eating a balanced, nutritious meal.
- Parents are noticing that their children are trying an increased variety of foods from the choices they are offered in the lunch menu, especially new fruits and vegetables.
- Low staff turnover and increased job enjoyment by foodservice staff.

### Future Plans

- Increase the use of whole grains in the meals (they have already started baking with 50% whole wheat flour); and
- Implement Recess before Lunch in additional elementary grades.

### For more information, contact:

Tammy Wham  
School Foodservice Director  
Ennis Schools  
(406) 682-4237

***School Wellness Champion!***

## **Healthy Vending Resolution Bozeman Public Schools**

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in District:** 30%

**Region:** South Central Montana

### **Healthy School Environment Emphasis**

In April 2003, the Bozeman School Board adopted a resolution prohibiting the sale of carbonated beverages on school campuses during the school day. Following adoption of the resolution, changes were made to increase the availability and marketing of healthful beverages in the schools.

### **What's Going On?**

The Bozeman School Board took an important step in promoting healthy habits to students by passing a resolution prohibiting the sale of carbonated beverages on school campuses during the school day. The resolution impacted vending machines, student stores and fundraising efforts at the high school (carbonated beverages were never accessible to elementary students in the district). Although the resolution didn't prohibit students or staff from consuming carbonated beverages at school, it did send a strong message that the district did not support the use of these beverages. Signs were changed in the high school to promote healthy beverages such as water and 100% fruit juices. In addition, the DECA student store added numerous healthful products and the school placed refrigerated vending machines containing a variety of healthful snacks and milk products in the cafeteria, giving students access to nutrient-rich products throughout the day. Also, a nutrition advisory council was formed (fall of 2003) to further address food related issues.

### **Features of this Model Program**

- Parents, health professionals and community members voiced concerns about the sale of unhealthful sweetened beverages in school vending machines.
- April 2003—the school board adopted a resolution to prohibit the sale of carbonated beverages on school campuses during the school day.
- August 2003—beverage vendor began stocking school vending machines with healthier beverages.
- Fall 2003—Wellness Advisory Council formed.

***School Wellness Champion!***

- Refrigerated vending machines added to school cafeteria—stocked with healthy items.
- Student store added healthful food and snack items.

### Words of Wisdom

*"Good education includes practicing what is taught and showing by example. If school districts teach good nutrition practices, they should also practice them. The removal of soft drinks from food offerings by the school district was only modeling the healthy choices which were being taught."*

-Carson Taylor, Chair—Bozeman School Board

### Outcomes

- Increased presence of healthful beverages sold on the high school campus through vending machines and the student store.
- No carbonated beverages sold during the school day.
- Adequate profit margin maintained from beverage vending machines.
- Strong community support for healthy school environments generated during the process.



### Future Plans

- Maintain an active Wellness Advisory Council to direct the implementation of the school district's wellness policy.
- Continue to improve student access to fresh fruits, vegetables and whole grains.
- Explore ways to increase daily physical activity with programs like "Safe Routes to School" for elementary schools.

### For more information, contact:

Dr. Michael Redburn, Superintendent  
Bozeman School District  
(406) 522-6001  
[mredburn@bozeman.k12.mt.us](mailto:mredburn@bozeman.k12.mt.us)

***School Wellness Champion!***

## Delicious and Nutritious at School Lewistown Public Schools

**Percentage Free/Reduced in District:** 79% breakfast, 50% lunch

**Region:** Central Montana

### Healthy School Environment Emphasis

Under the leadership of an innovative school foodservice director, the school meals in the Lewistown Public Schools have been transformed into visually appealing, delicious and nutritious culinary experiences.



### What's Going On?

An increased awareness of the important role of nutrition in supporting academic achievement and the overall health of children sparked a dedicated team in Lewistown to make some healthful changes to the food served at school. The changes were initiated at the beginning of the 2000-01 school year and have evolved since then. Parent newsletters, posters and meetings with staff and administrators were critical in communicating about the changes and getting buy-in from all parties involved. The philosophy that "students will make choices from what is offered to them" guided the transition. Students are now enjoying more fresh produce, whole grains, fewer sugar products and entrees reformulated to be lower in fat. Feedback from students is very positive.

### Features of this Model Program

- Fresh fruits/vegetables offered on the menu at least four days out of five.
- Old recipes are "tweaked" to improve the finished product, i.e., replace refined grains with whole grains.
- Healthy *Grab-and-Go* meals offered to secondary students.
- *Recess Before Lunch* at Highland Park Elementary.
- Special event days featuring peer interaction during the lunch period between elementary and secondary level students.

***School Wellness Champion!***

- Commitment by foodservice staff to develop and increase participation in the breakfast program now offered to all students at every grade level.
- Communication between foodservice program and the staff and students to provide a healthy nutrition environment for everyone.

### Words of Wisdom

*"The goal of Lewistown Public Schools Food Service is to enable students to be the best that they can be. By providing them with healthy choices and assisting them in forming good nutrition habits, we believe that we are successful in meeting that goal."*

-Cindy Giese, School Foodservice Director

### Outcomes

- Increased participation by students in school breakfast and lunch programs.
- Advocacy among parents for school foodservice program.
- Enhanced awareness among students of good nutrition.
- Older students successfully role modeling healthy habits.
- Improved academic progress and declining behavioral problems among students.
- Increased participation of teachers in school meals.
- Commitment among school food service to child nutrition.



### Future Plans

- Reviewing and revising school wellness policy to provide the best environment and education for students and staff.
- The foodservice program continuing to be a front runner in nutrition.

#### For more information, contact:

Cindy Giese, School Food Service Director  
Lewistown Public Schools  
(406) 535-5261  
[cgiese@lewistown.k12.mt.us](mailto:cgiese@lewistown.k12.mt.us)

***School Wellness Champion!***

## **HealthierUS Silver Award!**

### **Box Elder Elementary School**

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in School:** 80%

**Region:** Located on the Rocky Boy Reservation in Northern Montana

#### **Healthy School Environment Emphasis**

Box Elder Elementary School is the FIRST Native American School in the nation and the FIRST school in Montana to receive the HealthierUS School Challenge Silver Award.

#### **What's Going On?**

Box Elder Elementary School staff is committed to enhancing the school environment to promote good health and prevent diabetes. Healthy changes were made in the food offered at school, in student opportunity for physical activity and in nutrition education. These changes led to the school's applying for and receiving the HealthierUS School Challenge Silver Award.

#### **Features of this Model Program**

- Scratch cooking emphasized in healthful menus.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables served:
  - relish trays (K-5),
  - salad bars (6-8), and
  - fruit bar (all students).
- Only water and 100% juice in cafeteria vending.
- After School Cooking Program established:
  - students (grades 1-8) learn about nutrition,
  - build healthy life skills, and
  - traditional foods emphasized.
- Nutrition education is included in the curriculum.
- Nutrition articles appear in the school newsletter.
- Physical education classes are offered at all grade levels and additional physical activity opportunities are offered through the School Fitness Center, a Bonus PE Program, traditional sports activities and in a summer school program.
- Physical activity is promoted through a student reward system. Candy is never used as a reward for children.

***School Wellness Champion!***

### Words of Wisdom

*"The gratification in school nutrition comes with teaching the art of dining, rather than eating and stuffing your face."*

- Kimberly Patacsil, School Foodservice Manager

### Outcomes

- Student wellness is supported by delicious, healthy school meals, access to healthful snacks, increased opportunities for physical activity and nutrition education.
- Children are eating and enjoying a wider variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grain products at school.
- Children are learning to cook through the Afterschool Program.
- Box Elder staff are mentoring other schools/districts in the state based upon their experience with changes leading to a healthy school environment and the HealthierUS School Challenge program.



### Future Plans

- Continue to strive for excellence and apply for a Gold Level award.
- Share expertise and experience in becoming a HealthierUS School Challenge Silver Level Team Nutrition School with school districts around the state.
- Share menus and recipes, as well as tips and strategies for incorporating more nutrition education and physical education within the school environment, at state conferences and through one-on-one technical assistance opportunities.

#### For more information, contact:

Kimberly Patacsil, School Foodservice Manager  
Box Elder Elementary School  
Box 205  
Box Elder, MT 59521  
(406) 352-4195

Visit the Healthier US School Challenge Web site at:

<http://teamnutrition.usda.gov/HealthierUS/index.html>

***School Wellness Champion!***

## Healthy Eating, Disease Prevention Rocky Boy Public Schools

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in School:** 87%

**Region:** North Central Montana, on Rocky Boy Reservation

### Healthy School Environment Emphasis

Creation and implementation of a high quality, healthful school nutrition program to promote better health and disease prevention, in particular Type 2 Diabetes. Strong emphasis on serving homemade meals, limiting added sugar, sodium and fat and increasing the amount of whole grains and fresh fruits and vegetables.



### What's Going On?

In 2002, in response to a growing diabetes problem in the community, the district formed the Rocky Boy Healthy School Team—made up of school staff, health professionals, parents and a nutrition consultant. The team's first priority was to enhance the school's foodservice program by serving more homemade meals made up of a variety of fresh, whole foods. A cycle menu was developed and healthful changes were implemented. Changes include a regular salad bar, improved cooking techniques and inclusion of traditional Indian foods, such as bison and berries. Next, the Healthy School Team worked to eliminate unhealthy, carbonated beverages from vending machines. Finally, the school held two "Family, Food and Fun Nights" to engage families in fun and healthful activities, including a nutritious meal. Through all of these efforts, the school district hopes to establish healthier eating and physical activity habits the students will take with them into adulthood.

### Features of This Model Program

- Breakfast, lunch and an afterschool snack served.
- A summer food service program is also available.
- *Recess Before Lunch* in four elementary classes.
- Emphasis on serving homemade items as often as possible.
- A salad bar offered to all students four days a week.

***School Wellness Champion!***



- Four-week cycle menu for breakfast and lunch used.
- Whole grains served daily; all vegetables are either frozen or fresh; service of lean meats and protein sources a priority.
- Daily fruit bar with variety of fresh, frozen or canned fruits.
- Menu cycles include traditional Native American foods.
- Desserts served only once a month to honor birthdays.
- Vending machines contain only water and 100% juice.
- Committee created to help drive changes and complete tasks.
- "Family Fun Nights" held to involve parents and families in fun physical activities and health related education.

### Words of Wisdom

*"With the high incidence of Type 2 Diabetes on our reservation, we need to set a good example through our school environment for the future of our youth and community. Our goal is to support our youth in establishing healthy eating practices by allowing them to choose healthful foods in appropriate portion sizes each day. Change is very hard, but these changes are so important for so many reasons. "*

-Tracy Burns, MS, RD, Consultant Dietitian

### Outcomes

- Healthier school menus and vending machine offerings.
- Improved support from school administrators and staff for creating a healthy school environment.
- Teachers love the food and the children are enjoying it too.

### Future Plans

- Apply for a HealthierUS School Challenge Gold Award.
- Improve the nutrition of foods served at concessions, school parties, and at school fundraising opportunities.
- Increasing physical fitness opportunities for students outside of health enhancement classes, such as intramurals.

### For more information, contact:

Tracy Burns, MS, RD  
(406) 395-4486 X 247  
[healthlifestyles@hotmail.com](mailto:healthlifestyles@hotmail.com)



## ***School Wellness Champion!***

## **Staff Wellness Leads the Way Laurel Public Schools**

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in District:** 30%

**Region:** Central Montana

### **Healthy Environment Emphasis**

**Staff Wellness Program—** The Laurel School District has been a leader in the area of staff wellness program development and implementation. Through supportive administration and an active health insurance committee they joined forces with their health insurance provider to start a Wellness at Work program.

### **What's Going On?**

The school's health insurance committee negotiated with their health insurance provider to utilize a portion of their benefit funds toward a Wellness at Work Program. A third party provider serves as a liaison between the school district and the health insurance company. This third party provider brings expertise in wellness program design and monetary management of wellness program services.



### **Features of this Model Program**

- Beginning in 2004-05, the school district hired a wellness director to manage the program at the district level.
- An annual health fair was started with services including blood pressure checks, blood draw, flu shots, body fat measurement and nutrition information.
- A walking program has been put in place. Pedometers were purchased for participants of the walking program.
- Weight Watcher's participation is encouraged through incentive. The wellness program benefit pays for one-half of the Weight Watcher's program fee if participants attend 14 out of 16 meetings.
- Each employee gets a copy of the Mayo Clinic Self-Care Text.
- Fun organized activity outings for district employees, including Bowling Get-Together and Golf Scramble.

***School Wellness Champion!***

- Exercise classes (aerobics, yoga, Pilates) offered to district employees by professionals contracted by the school district. These classes are offered free of charge!
- Employees of the district get discounts at local fitness centers.
- “Chair Massage Day” at district schools—staff treated to relaxing, stress-relieving massage.
- Formation of “Lunch Salad/Fruit Clubs” at certain schools. Promotes increased enjoyment of fruits and vegetables daily.

### Words of Wisdom

*“Our Wellness at Work program has made a huge difference to the staff in our district. Many have expressed increased feelings of overall wellbeing and increased energy to do their job each day at school.”*

- Bette Strever, Wellness at Work Director  
Laurel School District

### Outcomes

- School nurse reported a decline in staff requesting headache remedies.
- Administrator observes overall stress level of staff is down.
- Great successes achieved through the Weight Watcher’s program.
- District teams formed to participate in Big Sky State Games – interest in wellness and physical activity has expanded beyond the school district.

### Future Plans

- Address healthy snacks for classroom parties.
- Reinvigorate participation in Staff Wellness Program – continual marketing and updating of program is necessary to maintain interest and participation.

### For more information, contact:

Bette Strever  
Wellness at Work Director Laurel  
Laurel High School  
(406) 628-7911  
[bette\\_strever@laurel.k12.mt.us](mailto:bette_strever@laurel.k12.mt.us)



***School Wellness Champion!***

## **Commitment to Wellness Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch**

**Percentage of Free/Reduced Meals:** 100% for residential students; 65% for day students

**Region/Description:** Independent, residential and day school located in Billings, Montana. Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch (YBGR) is a Residential Child Care Institution (RCCI) for emotionally disturbed youth.



### **Healthy School Environment Emphasis**

Effective and proactive school wellness committee.

### **What's Going On?**

In 2001, a committed group of professionals at YBGR got together to address nutrition and physical activity issues on the campus. Upon its formation, the committee thoroughly evaluated the current environment of YBGR relative to student wellness and identified the necessary components of a wellness plan to support healthy changes. The work of this committee is driven largely by a commitment to decrease the incidence of obesity among students and a recognition of the importance of nutrition in behavioral and academic success.

### **Features of this Model Program**

- All snacks available to youth, outside of regular meal time, are of high nutritional value.
- All vending machines contain snacks and beverages that are nutritious, have low calorie, low sugar and low caffeine content.
- The YBGR wellness policy is campus-wide, affecting staff and youth.
- Staff members serve as positive role models for youth through healthy food choices and active living.
- Walking paths of various lengths have been mapped out throughout the campus.
- A fully equipped recreation center and baseball field have been developed for use by staff and youth.

***School Wellness Champion!***

- An RCCI policy has been put in place which requires all residential youth to receive 30-60 minutes of vigorous activity six days/week as part of their treatment plan.

### **Words of Wisdom**

*"The Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch wellness services strive to provide a holistic approach to all the health and well being concerns of our residential community. This approach actively addresses nutrition and health education, physical activity, life skills, health care services, and a healthy and safe environment that focuses on both physical and emotional well being."*

-Lance Crosby, Director of Nursing and Wellness  
Committee Chairperson, YBGR

### **Outcomes**

- Baseline data was collected through a nutrition and fitness evaluation of the YBGR facility. Wellness committee goals largely based upon this data.
- Reduction in overweight and obesity among students.
- Enthusiastic support among staff for policy changes affecting the nutritional value of food available on campus.
- Increased interest in physical activity among youth.
- Increased number of healthy food and beverage options available at school store.

### **Future Plans**

- Build a walking track;
- Establish a park/activity area on the East campus;
- Provide health equipment in the residential lodges;
- Hire professional staff to teach exercise classes; and
- Develop a wellness orientation program for all new employees.

### **For more information, contact:**

Lance Crosby  
Chairperson, Nutrition and  
Wellness Committee  
(406) 655-2100



***School Wellness Champion!***

## Coordinated and Comprehensive Lockwood Elementary

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in School:** 46%

**Region:** Southeast Montana

### Healthy School Environment Emphasis

Model example of a coordinated and comprehensive health program.

#### What's Going On?

Lockwood Elementary has adopted a coordinated approach to supporting good health among students and staff, including school administrators, the foodservice director,



school nurse and the health enhancement teachers. The school nutrition program offers breakfast, lunch, an after school snack and a summer feeding program to students. Menus are planned to meet the recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines, focusing on the inclusion of more whole grains, low fat dairy, lean protein sources and a variety of fruits and vegetables. The school supports a strong health enhancement program with use of the "Fitness Gram" curriculum, as well as a strong staff wellness program.

#### Features of this Model Program

- Breakfast, lunch, after school snack and summer feeding program.
- *Recess Before Lunch* for all grades since 2005.
- High fiber cereals and protein part of breakfast.
- A variety of fresh fruits and vegetables included in lunch.
- Low fat food preparation techniques followed.
- Whole grain products in both lunch and breakfast menus.
- Small portion sizes of snack and dessert items.

***School Wellness Champion!***

- Serve homemade items as often as possible.
- Snack vending machines are not available to students.
- Beverage vending water, 100% juices and sport drinks only.
- Health information in parent and staff newsletters.
- A non-food reward system for students.
- Full time nurse is employed by the health department.
- Latex-free throughout the school.
- Hand washing policy and education program in place.
- Staff wellness activities coordinated with local hospital.
- "Fitness Gram" curriculum in health enhancement classes.
- Health Enhancement Committee maintains sequential (K-8), up-to-date curriculum.

#### **Words of Wisdom**

*"Teaching is one of the most important jobs in our society. We must support this with whatever we can. If staff and students are not healthy, then we can't do our job as educators."*

- Eileen Johnson, Superintendent

#### **Outcomes**

- Access to healthy, balanced meals and snacks throughout the school year and summer months.
- More relaxed eating environment at mealtime.
- Strong health enhancement program for students and staff wellness program for staff.
- Enhanced school nursing services—able to care for medical needs and contribute to health curriculum.

#### **Future Plans**

- Ensure adequate time for student meals.
- Reformation of an on-going School Health Advisory Council.
- Strengthening the Health Department/School relationship.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Eileen Johnson, Superintendent  
Lockwood Elementary School

[johnsone@lockwood.k12.mt.us](mailto:johnsone@lockwood.k12.mt.us)

(406) 252-6022

***School Wellness Champion!***

## Meals that Look and Taste Great St. Labre Indian School

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in School:** 57% free /17% reduced for grades PreK-8 and 63% free/15% reduced for grades 9-12

**Region:** Southeastern Montana, on the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation

### Healthy School Environment Emphasis

The St. Labre school nutrition program, under the leadership of an innovative school foodservice director, has transformed the cafeteria into a relaxing, appealing place to eat and has changed meal offerings to emphasize variety, freshness, high nutritional value and great taste.

### What's Going On?

Under the direction of Foodservice Director Starr Fulmer, a committed staff works hard to serve attractive and healthful meals and snacks that are consistent with the recommendations of the U.S. Dietary Guidelines. An increased variety of menu choices encourages students to try and enjoy new foods. Fresh fruit and vegetables are promoted through a salad bar and whole grains are served every day. Cultural food items, such as locally raised buffalo, are also included in the menu. A renovation of the cafeteria in 2001 has created a relaxing, pleasant eating environment. Garnishes, baskets and seasonal decorations enhance the visual appeal of menu items while roundtables allow students to socialize more readily over their meals. The foodservice program staff models healthful lifestyle habits for students with regular fifteen-minute morning walk breaks.



### Features of this Model Program

- Breakfast, lunch and after-school snacks (and dinner to 8-12<sup>th</sup> grade boarders) served daily.
- Homemade items provided as often as possible.
- Fresh, canned, and frozen fruits and veggies served

***School Wellness Champion!***



- Healthy cooking techniques enhance nutrition of foods.
- <sup>33</sup>Daily salad bar for all grades.
- Cultural foods, such as buffalo, included in many recipes.
- Pleasant cafeteria atmosphere allows students to enjoy their dining experience.
- Additional serving lines added to increase eating time.
- Appealing presentation of food.
- Colorful uniforms worn by food service staff convey a very clean and professional appearance.
- Healthful lifestyle habits modeled by food service staff.
- Vending machine limited to water, juice and sports drinks.
- Ongoing health education and healthy food preparation techniques provided to entire food service staff

### **Words of Wisdom**

*"Our primary goal is to teach the kids what lunch should "look like." We want them to become so accustomed to seeing fresh fruits and vegetables, dark green salads, whole wheat breads, and something other than french fries as a side dish, that when they have a meal at home or at a restaurant, they will think something is missing if it is not included with their meal."*

-Starr Fulmer, Foodservice Director

### **Outcomes**

- Increased participation in lunch program, especially by high school students.
- Increased enjoyment of balanced, nutritious meals and socializing.
- Parents report increased intake of variety of foods among children— especially new fruits and vegetables.
- Increased job enjoyment and commitment by a core group of food service staff.

### **Future Plans**

- Create and implement a healthy a la carte program.
- Apply for a HealthierUS School Challenge Award.
- Offer a Wellness Retreat to school foodservice staff.
- Include a reimbursable meal on the a la carte line for the high school.

#### **For more information, contact:**

Starr Fulmer, School Foodservice Director

(406) 784-4520

[sfulmer@stlabre.org](mailto:sfulmer@stlabre.org)

***School Wellness Champion!***

## Customer Satisfaction in Saco Saco Public Schools

**Percentage of Free/Reduced in School:** 49.37%

**Region:** Northeastern Montana

### Healthy School Environment Emphasis



Saco Public Schools has created a high quality school nutrition program that is committed to making healthy choices possible for students and staff.

### What's Going On?

In 2000, the administration and staff of Saco Public Schools began working on a commitment to enhance their foodservice program. They have focused on improving customer satisfaction while offering students a variety of healthful choices. School Foodservice Supervisor Jeanette Salveson and her staff have adopted the philosophy of "making healthy choices possible." Their efforts were prompted by the perception of some students that the school meals were "making them fat." Rather than see the students choose not to eat, the foodservice program began offering an alternative lunch to their regular hot lunch menu. The menus are planned to include a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables, more whole grains and nutritious legumes. A breakfast program is also offered and healthful snacks are available in a refrigerated vending machine.

### Features of This Model Program

- Breakfast and lunch are served daily to the students.
- The cafeteria is located in the center of the school and has become the social as well as the nutritional center.
- Homemade items are served as often as possible.
- For the 7-12<sup>th</sup> grade students, an alternative menu in addition to the hot lunch is offered each day. This alternative menu includes luncheon meat, cheese, bread, soup (in colder months) and whole fresh fruit.
- A salad bar is offered to all students each day which includes canned, frozen or fresh fruits and vegetables.

***School Wellness Champion!***

- The school bakes its own bread and the recipe includes at least 1/3 whole wheat flour. Only brown rice is served to students and favorite bean dishes include chili and cowboy beans (baked beans).
- Breakfast includes protein at least three or more times a week and fresh fruit each day.
- A refrigerated snack vending machine provides a variety of healthful snacks each day to students and staff.

### Words of Wisdom

*"We have an unwritten policy in the lunchroom that we all give the kind of respect we want to receive. As foodservice employees, we set the example by being courteous and up beat. We love our kids and let it show by our actions. The kids really want to be healthy and feel good – we help them do that."*

-Jeanette Salveson, Foodservice Supervisor

### Outcomes

- High participation rate in lunch program (89%).
- Enjoyable, relaxing cafeteria environment.
- Balanced, healthful meals at school and access to healthful snacks throughout the day.
- Increased consumption of fruits and vegetables.
- Positive, respectful role modeling by foodservice staff.



### Future Plans

- Offer a mini-nutrition fair for students, families and community members;
- Eliminate high-sugar breakfast cereals and continue to introduce students to new tastes by serving a wide variety of fruits, vegetables and whole grains; and
- Enhance nutrition of all recipes and continue improving salad bar.

### For more information, contact:

Jeanette Salveson, Food Service Supervisor  
Saco School  
(406) 527-3531  
[granthecook@yahoo.com](mailto:granthecook@yahoo.com)

***School Wellness Champion!***

# School Wellness Contacts and Resources

## **Montana Team Nutrition Program**

Katie Bark, RD: [kbark@mt.gov](mailto:kbark@mt.gov) or (406) 994-5641

Mary Stein, MS: [mstein@montana.edu](mailto:mstein@montana.edu) or (406) 994-5640

## **Online Resources**

Montana Team Nutrition Program

[www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/teamNutritionNEW.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/teamNutritionNEW.html)

Team Nutrition

[www.teamnutrition.usda.gov](http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov)

Action for Healthy Kids

[www.actionforhealthykids.org](http://www.actionforhealthykids.org)

USDA's My Pyramid Food Guidance System

[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)

Family Cook Productions School Wellness Toolkit for Parent Groups

[www.familycookproductions.com/assets/FamilyCook\\_Toolkit.zip](http://www.familycookproductions.com/assets/FamilyCook_Toolkit.zip)

Montana OPI School Wellness Policy Page

[www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/wellness.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/wellness.html)

Nutrition Explorations: School Wellness in Action

[www.nutritionexplorations.org/sfs/wellness\\_action.asp](http://www.nutritionexplorations.org/sfs/wellness_action.asp)

Montana School Food Service Peer Consultant Training Network

[www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/teamNutritionNEW.html](http://www.opi.mt.gov/schoolfood/teamNutritionNEW.html) (Resources)

